GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1007
ANSWERED ON:21.07.2017
Presence of Pesticides above MRLs
Pandey Shri Rajesh

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of increasing use and presence of pesticides above the Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) in food products;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to enhance awareness about removal of pesticides from vegetables and fruits?

Answer

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULASTE)
(a) & (b): The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is aware of the reports that appeared in the media from time to time regarding presence of pesticides above the Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) fixed by it in respect of various agricultural commodities. As per information made available by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, around 3% of samples of vegetable picked up from various Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee markets, local markets, farm gate, organic outlets and Public Distribution systems had MRLs above prescribed limits. However, samples of fruits and vegetables drawn from Food Business Operators by States/UTs during 2014-15 and 2015-16 and tested, were not found to contain pesticides above MRLs notified by FSSAI. Implementation and enforcement of the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, 2006 and regulations thereunder primarily rests with the Food Safety Departments of the States/Union Territories. Regular surveillance, monitoring, inspection and random sampling of food products is undertaken by the officials of Food Safety Departments of the respective States/ UTs to ensure that food products comply with laid down standards. In cases, where food samples are found to be non-conforming to the prescribed standards, recourse is taken to penal provisions under Chapter IX of the FSS Act, 2006.

(c): The washing and processing of vegetable and fruits helps in removal of residues of pesticides to a large extent. The Stakeholders across the country, including consumers, are made aware and educated by FSSAI through various communication platforms, print and outdoor media campaigns, social media, education booklets, stall at Fairs/Melas/Events and Mass Awareness Campaigns, etc. about the importance of washing fruits and vegetables before consumption to avoid harmful effects of pesticides. FSSAI has also instructed State Food Safety Commissioners to undertake awareness campaign on the pesticides/insecticides residues in fruits and vegetables to educate consumers in this regard.